

communitas

PERSONAL
PROJECT
EXHIBITION

Learn about engineering & earthquake-proof technology

Plan and find inspiration for the outcome

Collect resources

Build outcome

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by **Purpose**

PAFA NEWS

SCIS has parent organizations called the Parents and Friends Association (PAFA) on each campus. PAFA serves as a way that parents can communicate ideas for the betterment of the school to the administration and Board. SCIS is proud of the high level of parent participation in their schools and value their partnership with the parent community. PAFA conducts various activities, from community events to charity fundraisers to volunteer support for teachers and students. Each campus has a PAFA board who works closely with each campus' administrations to plan events that help to make SCIS Campuses a unique experience for families, faculty, and students alike. We are always welcoming new members!

For more information about PAFA, please contact us at:

HONGQIAO MAIN & ECE CAMPUSES

President

Cindy Huang
pafa-hq-pres@scis-china.org

Vice President /

Upper School Rep (11-12)

Nina Han
pafa-hq-pres@scis-china.org

Upper School Rep (9-10)

Jamie Thibideau
pafa-hq-us@scis-parent.org

Upper School Rep (6-8)

Merry Yang
pafa-hq-us@scis-parent.org

Lower School Reps

Debbie Foster
Fiona Tsai
pafa-hq-ls@scis-parent.org

Treasurer

Sherly Gao
pafa-hq-tres@scis-china.org

Secretary

Dylan Lotfi
pafa-hq-sec@scis-china.org

ECE Reps

May Botha
Lucky Le
Harley Qin
pafa-hq-ece@scis-parent.org

Events Team

Jean Chae
Neha Jaswal Krishna
Willow Ryu
Eileen Song
pafa-hq-events@scis-parent.org

PUDONG CAMPUS

President

Silvia Gatti
silviagatti@scis-parent.org

Vice President

Preeti Shah
preetishah@scis-parent.org

Treasurer

Sheila So
sheila.so@scis-parent.org

Communications Coordinator

Sanna Korsstrom
sannakorsstrom@scis-parent.org

Events Coordinator

Fabienne Vidal
fabiennevidal@scis-parent.org

Secretary

Maria Shin
mariashin@scis-parent.org

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Editor: Elena Tan

Art Director: Mun Yee Choo

Designer: Alles Zheng

Do you have a story to tell, a project to share, or art to be displayed? Let Communitas be a platform for your voice.

Communitas is about community and we rely on contributions from the SCIS community.

Should you have any comments, observations, wish to submit articles, or inquire as to ways to collaborate, feel free to send all inquiries or correspondence to the Communitas editor via email at etan@scis-china.org.

Communitas is published three times per year for the SCIS community, our friends, and the larger Shanghai community.

We are social! Feel free to visit us on the web at www.scis-china.org and follow us!



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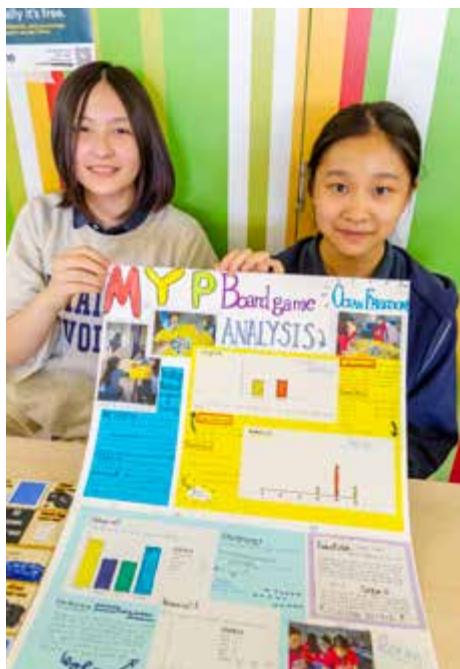
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Book Recommendations for All Ages





Powered by **Purpose**



“Life is never made unbearable by circumstances, but only by lack of meaning and purpose.” – Viktor Frankl

According to an article by Health Match, research suggests that members of Generation Z (children aged 10 to 17) are the most anxious generation to date. While it is important to note that the generations before Generation Z have encountered similar factors that cause anxiety, it is also possible that Generation Z's experience is heightened due to the ubiquitous nature of social media. Further, researchers have discovered a relationship between problematic social media use (PSMU) and children having difficulties with finding purpose as they are not able to successfully establish goals and are prone to procrastinate.

With social media platforms designed to 'enhance' their day-to-day lives, social media has become more present than ever in the lives of this age group. Likes, followers, and re-sharing have become the new social currency and contribute to the feeling of gratification that this generation experiences, and more worryingly so, crave. It is here that we find a growing level of frustration as this generation finds itself on a continuous cycle of seeking

self-fulfillment. Thus, students become reliant on outside factors such as likes and follows to validate their estimation of their self-worth, rather than drawing fulfillment from within.

This is why it is important to introduce the concept of 'purpose' and lead our students to actions that will help instill a sense of meaning in their choices and actions. Learning is more meaningful when students do so with a purpose. Shanghai Community International School (SCIS) encourages students to undergo deep and personal exploration, allowing them to establish purpose on their own.

Having a purpose helps them reframe stressful situations and allows them to deal with them in a more productive manner, while also feeling more in control. This will help with their self-esteem, while alleviating the feeling of anxiety.

Ultimately, we want to help our students experience their adolescent years enjoyably while also preparing them to weather the trying times successfully. A life with



challenges is not unbearable, instead, it is a journey powered by a purpose that makes it worth living and enjoying.

It remains our goal at SCIS to help our students harness that sense of purpose and guide them toward applying that purpose in a manner that cultivates their ability to become exceptional thinkers who are prepared for the future. In doing so, we believe they will be able to confidently push back against the listless tendencies that can take hold in this age of social media. In turn, this is how we will deliver on our school mission, *“to develop inquiring, knowledgeable, and caring learners who contribute positively to their communities.”*



By Daniel Eschtruth,
Director of Schools
at SCIS





The Difference Between a Holistic and Traditional Education

According to Alec Peterson, the founding Director-General of the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO), the goal of an international education is “to develop to their fullest potential the powers of each individual to understand, to modify and to enjoy his or her environment, both inner and outer, in its physical, social, moral, aesthetic and spiritual aspects.”¹ This commitment to a holistic approach, the understanding of education as serving the whole child as a human being in all their complexity, is a commitment shared by SCIS, consistent with our mission “to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring learners who contribute positively to their communities.” As an IB World School, we use this international framework and vision to facilitate the growth of every Dragon.

SCIS students in the Primary Years Programme (PYP), Middle Years Programme (MYP), and Diploma Programme (DP) can identify the hallmarks and values of a truly holistic education. When speaking with students about their experiences at SCIS, they recognized the outstanding education they receive

through the diversity of courses, the depth of learning, and the way their courses at SCIS instill a desire to learn. Students also spoke of the other components of an IB Education in the MYP and DP. These included being Internationally Minded (IM), working on the Personal Project (PP) in Grade 10, and building and developing the Approaches to Learning (ATL) skills.

Personal Project:

"The Personal Project allows students to experience a holistic education because students can take the initiative. In addition, students are able to explore the topics in which they are interested in a formal academic way. Students can do things that they choose early on in Grade 10 so they can succeed independently. Independent learning is a big part of what SCIS advocates for and taking initiative is just a useful skill in life in general." - Charlie C. (Grade 10)

"The Personal Project is a way to work on yourself and your own personal interests. It also makes you learn how to manage your own time outside of school, but with the guidance of the school. It is quite interesting because I was able to see what my process

was. The IB curriculum involves a lot of ATL skills, which prepares us for the future." – Leonie C. (Grade 10)

International Mindedness

"Being exposed to many different cultures has really made my time at SCIS more enjoyable because I am not caring just about myself. I am more aware of the people and cultures around me and in the world. My global awareness and focus on being internationally minded has been heightened by the international environment here at SCIS." – Daisy Y. (Grade 12)

"The SCIS community has introduced me to many new environments and cultures, allowing me to develop international relationships and a much better understanding of the interactions between people. This will help me as I move into university." – Ingrid Y. (Grade 12)

Approaches to Learning Skills

"ATL skills are skills in the MYP that can really help us be successful in school and in life. I am really into design and mathematics, and I am fascinated by airplanes, so I think I am going to go into aeronautical engineering.

To succeed in engineering and in mechanics, I will need to have strong ATL skills, such as collaboration and time management. These skills will help me succeed in being able to plan and complete my projects." – Ahaan S. (Grade 8)

"ATL skills are skills that can help students do better in the world around us. Working on ATL skills means that we are able to communicate and think for ourselves. SCIS helps us by developing our education and working with us to build these skills in our classes and all aspects of SCIS." – Chloe C. (Grade 8)



By Dr. Amy Valerio, Upper School Principal at SCIS Hongqiao, Naomi Shanks, Upper School Principal at SCIS Pudong



Finding Your Path Starts in the PYP



“Why is the sky blue?” “Are clouds made of cotton candy?” “How do airplanes fly?” “What is a rainbow made of?” “Where does the sun go at night?” “When does the moon get really big?”

Did these questions create a specific experience in your mind? Could you imagine this conversation happening with your child? This might be a conversation that occurs in the span of a few minutes looking up at the sky while walking in the park.

Children are curious. They want to learn about the world around them, and the easiest way to learn more about something is to ask questions. Lots of questions. To adults, it may feel like the questions never stop regardless of how many times we have answered. But to a child, it is how they figure out their place in the world. Allowing, and encouraging, these questions are a critical component of learning.

Too often children eventually stop asking curiosity questions and it begins to feel difficult to engage your child in meaningful conversations. However, in the Primary Years Programme (PYP), inquiry is fundamental. As a PYP teacher and currently, a PYP Coordinator, I appreciate that questions are the starting point for why, what, and how we teach. Honoring students queries and interests engages them and makes learning more meaningful.

When planning units of inquiry, teachers (and students!) utilize a questioning lens. Why are we learning this? What are we learning? How are we learning? Our central ideas are designed to pose more questions. Lines of inquiry are linked with key concepts that help guide us to answer questions like “What is it like?”, “How does it work?”, “How is it linked to other things?”, “How is it transforming?”, “Why is it like this?”, “What are the points of view?”, and “What are our obligations?”. We tap into student questions to plan learning experiences. And, of course, we ask questions for students to reflect on their learning.

In the PYP, children explore and learn how the world around them works by asking questions. They develop likes and dislikes, interests, hopes and dreams. Frequently, they express what they want to do when they are older. Whether it is a specific job like becoming a movie director or doing something like growing crystals in their home (both real examples told me by Kindergarteners over the years!), finding your path starts in the PYP.

The PYP is transdisciplinary which means the programme is designed to emulate the real world. From the IB PYP publication, *Learning and Teaching* (2019), “Transdisciplinary transcends subjects. It begins and ends with a problem, an



issue, or a theme. Students' interests and questions form the heart of transdisciplinary learning. It is a curriculum-organizing approach where human commonalities rise to the top without regard for subject boundaries. Subjects become an instrument/tool/resource to explore a theme, problem or concept in depth. The result is a different or new organizing framework (Beane 1997; Klein 2006)."

Next time your child begins an avalanche of questions, lean into it. You never know what the questions may lead to or what path your child may find.

For more ideas, check out the IB PYP publication, “Parent guide to personal inquiries in the PYP” (2020).



*Malika Meidinger, PYP Coordinator
at SCIS Pudong*

The Cornerstone of the MYP: Interdisciplinary Learning

What is interdisciplinary learning in the MYP?

As the name suggests, interdisciplinary learning is when students are guided to synthesize their understanding from multiple subject areas to produce novel ideas and/or to solve real-world issues. The MYP further describes its aim to:

- Develop, analyze, and synthesize knowledge from different disciplines to generate a deeper understanding.
- Explore (and integrate) different and diverse perspectives through inquiry.
- Reflect on the unique ways interdisciplinary learning allows us to communicate and act.

How do we organize our interdisciplinary learning at SCIS?

To achieve these aims, each grade level has collaboratively developed an interdisciplinary unit for our project week - MYP Week. During this week, students from Grades 6-10 are off timetable and each grade level inquires into different topics by using knowledge and understanding from different subject areas. This is an intense learning week (and I would not

call it an easy week for anyone) and a truly amazing opportunity for students. During MYP Week, students focus on one project where they can work with teachers and other students whom they do not work with under a regular schedule. In addition, students have many outside visitors and parent volunteers to gain authentic input from the real world.

What does each grade-level project look like?

Each grade level develops a unique interdisciplinary project with a diverse focus. The following describes how students are developing their interdisciplinary understanding in each

project. All the projects involve community input and authentic learning experiences to incrementally build skills from one year to another.

Grade 6 – Languages and Arts: Identity through Children’s Literature

Grade 6 students read children’s books in their mother tongue and create an art piece showing their understanding of the book and how it is related to their identity. This year, parent volunteers kindly modeled how to read stories for our Grade 6, then our Grade 6 students read stories to Grade 2 students in their mother tongue. It was such a great project to bring our community together.

Grade 7 – Math and Design: Games and Product Testing

Grade 7 students focus on the product testing of a logic puzzle using their mathematical knowledge and skills in design. This year, we had a parent volunteer who specialized in product testing, which enriched Grade 7’s inquiry. Also, our Grade 7 students had opportunities to share their products with Grade 4 students, which was exciting for our Lower School friends.





Grade 8 – Sciences and PHE: Sports Science

Grade 8 students analyze sports performance using scientific methods and create a video to coach and improve their skills in sports. This is an exciting project because it involves science experiments such as dissections and physical activities of the student's choice to complete their final product. This year, we had several specialists come in to facilitate workshops on sports performance and anatomy, which made the learning experience more relevant and realistic for the students.

Grade 9 – I&S and Arts: SCIS JEDI

Through active inquiry and research, Grade 9 students identify and engage with the JEDI (Justice, Equality, Diversity, Inclusion) issues and create a comic to share their understanding and message. This year, we had a professional comic artist on Microsoft Teams call to give a comic drawing workshop class.

Grade 10 – PHE and I&S: Leadership

Grade 10 students inquire into the nature of leadership and create written products to consolidate their understanding of what it means to be a great leader. Students engage in diverse opportunities in joining sports activities and have opportunities to show their leadership throughout the week.



*By Tetsuo Ishii,
MYP Coordinator
at SCIS Hongqiao*





Individual Growth, Change *and* Decision-making in Language Learning

With a student body as diverse as Shanghai Community International School (SCIS), a language teacher's role is rewarding yet challenging. A prime example of this is deciding how and when to support a student's transition from Language Acquisition into Language and Literature. Some students arrive at SCIS with minimal knowledge of a language, and Language Acquisition teachers nurture the development of the receptive and productive skills at the heart of teaching and learning until a student is ready to move to Language and Literature.

In my Upper School English Language Acquisition classes, individual students' growth paths are highly individualized. With English as the school's teaching language, students often transform rapidly from nervous emerging communicators into capable English speakers accessing the whole curriculum through English. Frequently though, their speaking races ahead of their writing, thus language development may differ in English compared to Spanish, French, or Chinese. Nevertheless, teachers of all languages guide students on a journey from learning to communicate to using it as a tool for learning about the world. The goal is to become a proficient language user confident in critically analyzing language in a Language and Literature class.

The decision to change a student's language program is never taken lightly, and a teacher considers the growth of a student's language proficiency in detail. A variety of data is evaluated including formal and informal assessment outcomes, prior learning, future learning priorities, socio-emotional development, and proficiency in key academic skills across the curriculum. Additionally, a Language Acquisition teacher will often introduce skills such as interpreting poetry or analyzing advertisements that imitate those in Language and Literature to observe how competently a student handles them.

This personalized approach is never about a single factor or grade. Nevertheless, there are common patterns, one being that moving a student with potential in Middle School increases the likelihood of longer-term success. Similarly, for some older students there is simply not enough time for language learning to switch from Language Acquisition to Language and Literature as the whole curriculum grows more demanding.

For any Language Acquisition teacher, it is a proud moment to tell a student, "You are ready to leave my class." These words of praise are a rite of passage representing achievement, growth, and hard work. Sometimes they are hard to say because I have taught a student for a long time or because I want to be certain they are ready, or because I know the student may face initial setbacks from new challenges in a Language and Literature course.

Predicting students' future development is not simple although experience makes it slightly easier. Experience also tells us that once we decide it is time to talk to students about preparing to leave Language Acquisition, the majority strive harder to reach higher and grow faster. For Language Acquisition teachers, that means students leave us, and we are happy with that!



*By Robert Staples, MYP/
DP Language Acquisition
Teacher at SCIS Pudong*





Supporting Speech and Language Skills *at* SCIS

Language Skills at School

We know that students use language skills during reading and writing tasks, but did you know that language plays a primary role in classes like Science, Music, Art, Design, Drama, and even P.E.?

Speech and language skills directly relate to a student's ability to contribute to classroom discussions, express their knowledge, and join in peer conversations. Students also use language to follow directions throughout the school day, such as, "Put away your books, get your blue folder, and find a spot at the table." or an instruction in P.E. class like, "The blindfolded player must collect the beanbag and return it to the bucket." Speech and language skills have a profound and lasting effect on academic growth.

Language Skills at Home

Language use isn't limited to the classroom. Language is an essential skill for daily life. We use language to share our news, ask for things, seek help and solve problems, and build relationships.

Language skills at home start from the moment a child enters the family. Typically, a child does not need active teaching in their home language; however, providing a language-rich environment is important for all children. When learning multiple languages, specific vocabulary and grammar do not transfer between them, yet many skills do, such as listening stamina, telling stories with a beginning-middle-end, and knowing conversation rules.

Some children experience delays or disorders in the speech-language acquisition, meaning their home language (and all languages) are harder for them to learn. This is the population served by speech-language pathologists.

Role of the Speech-Language Pathologist at SCIS

SCIS employs two full-time speech-language pathologists (SLPs) as members of the Student Support Team. SLPs are professionals who provide formal evaluation, diagnosis, consultation, and treatment for students with clinical communication difficulties, for example:

- language comprehension and expression
- articulation of speech sounds
- stammering/stuttering
- social communication
- students with learning disabilities, hearing loss, cleft palate, etc.
- neurodiverse students (e.g., autistic)

Working through Early Childhood, Lower School, and Upper School, and with so many diagnoses, what we do varies enormously! Our goals target communication skills that will have a meaningful impact on participation in daily life, such as following directions, negotiating with friends, or asking for help. Whilst the current therapists only work in English, we work on skills that the student needs to improve in all their languages.

Speech-language therapy is relevant from Early Years all the way to Upper School. Evidence shows that early intervention for speech and language delays gives the best results and can reduce the need for support in later years. Early Years students may have goals around play skills, vocabulary, and early word combinations. As students grow, they need to increase their listening skills to multi-step directions, present several connected ideas, negotiate and plan group projects, and explain their needs and advocate for themselves.

The SLP collaborates with teachers and families to promote language-building strategies, as well as coach others to be supportive conversation partners.

Tips for supporting speech-language skills at home:

Any activity you and your child do together is a chance for language development.

Speak your home language(s)

Give your child opportunities to practice talking and listening to the language(s) you speak at home via games, books, daily activities, and community interactions.

Interact face-to-face

Position yourself at your child's level. For younger children, sit on the floor or at the table, or crouch down low.

Comment instead of question

Talk about what you and your child are doing or describe what your child is interested in. After speaking, pause and wait for them to respond.

Repeat what your child says, using the correct words or sounds.

If your child makes an error, don't correct it. Instead, say the sentence back so they can hear your correct model.

Add new words

If your child says, "That truck is big!", emphasize a different word

that means the same: "Yes, it's huge!". Or if your older child remarks, "Cities got bigger and stuff after farming", respond, "Cities expanded after farming? Wow!"

Talk about books together

Books are a great way to expand vocabulary. Talk about the characters' attributes and feelings. Make predictions about what might happen next. For older children, encourage your child to summarize the main idea in one sentence: "This book is about a ___ who ___".

Play games!

Look for games that offer opportunities to practice skills such as giving and following directions, asking and answering questions, describing, and learning new words:

- Barrier games, such as Hedbanz (ages 7+), and matching and memory games, such as Shopping List (ages 3-7)
- Word games, such as I Spy (age 3+) and Twenty Questions: (age 7+)
- Verbal memory games (age 8+) e.g., take turns adding items to a verbal list, each player having to repeat the whole list on their turn

Students may be referred to the speech-language pathologist by their teachers or parents or be identified during SLP classroom visits and screening programs.

Speech-language pathologists are core members of the Student Support Teams at SCIS, providing collaborative support to meet the needs of unique learners.



By Emily Hastings, Speech and Language Pathologist at SCIS Hongqiao, and Paula Willis, Speech and Language Pathologist at SCIS Pudong





Thriving in Stride: **Successful Transitioning** in an **International Community**

In the Upper School at Shanghai Community International School (SCIS) Hongqiao campus, we have more than 450 students from 38 different nations, of whom 66% speak native languages other than English. As a large percentage of our student population comprises of Third Culture Kids (TCKs), also known as Global Nomads, it is vital that as counselors, we help them understand themselves and the third culture that they are integrating into. As Global Nomads in the multicultural city of Shanghai, students may feel they belong everywhere and nowhere at the same time.

The three Upper School counselors at the Hongqiao campus have a combined total of living internationally for 42 years. Since we chose to be expatriates, we live transiently with offerings of diverse perspectives and experiences. We are aware of the joys and challenges of living abroad, and cognizant of significant life events

in which we may have missed with those who we care about “at home.” Holidays and travel are a bit easier now with the slow release of pandemic restrictions and the newfound freedom to travel, yet for our younger population, these decisions may not be theirs to make.

To aid new students in their transition to SCIS, we have a robust buddy program in which we pair a new student with a “buddy” from their advisory to show them the ropes of how to access class materials and communication; and direct them around the intricate architectural make-up of our school campus. We encourage new students to maintain balance and self-care with school and home life by participating in activities that bring them joy, cultivate knowledge, and have time to rest and reflect.

New and returning students have ample opportunities to build connections in our school community by

participating in the fun and social aspects of SCIS life. Activities range from a variety of sports (e.g., basketball, swimming, soccer, volleyball, badminton); supervised after-school activities and clubs (e.g., Wellness and Inclusion, Crafts, Painting, Band, Board Games, Rock Climbing, Baking, Robotics); and leadership opportunities (e.g., Student Ambassadors, Student Council, Advisory Representatives, House Captains, Club Leaders).

At times, our new students may experience academic, social, and/or personal difficulties integrating into our school culture, as change may bring feelings of anxiety and stress. Every student at SCIS will have a general check-in with their allocated counselor at least once every semester. Whether it be on the front steps where we greet students every morning at 7:30 am, informal groups, formal individual sessions, advisory lessons, chaperoning sports events or field trips, we make it our mission to support every student to ensure they feel comfortable and safe at school.

Further, another one of our roles in the Pastoral Department is to have an eight-day meeting for each grade level that includes the entire Pastoral team. The purpose of these meetings is to give us time to discuss and reflect on how we can best support our students' well-being and academic needs; plus, assist our teachers who teach the students. With the data collected from the weekly check-and-connect forms and teachers' shared insights from the Caring Adult check-ins, departmental and student support evaluations, we can gain a holistic perspective and implement an action plan to further assist our students to ensure the development of authentic individualized connections. These are some of the ways we preserve a sense of belonging for our students. As the name of our school signifies, we are a community, in which we provide services and support that fit our community's needs and are run by the people who understand and know our students best.



*By Sophia Kim, Grade 8-10
Counselor at SCIS Hongqiao*



Enriching Summer Opportunities for Upper School Students



Summer will soon be rolling in and our SCIS community will be headed for destinations near and far. In addition to much-needed connections and reunions with friends and family, you may consider exploring summer enrichment opportunities. Summer is an excellent time to foster your child's interests and build on academic and leadership skills from the classroom. Moreover, for those with high school children, taking a few half-days for career and or university exploration can help them get a clearer picture of what their life would look like after SCIS.

If you are considering enrolling your child in a summer camp, you might start by asking friends or family, locals at your summer destination, for recommendations. For sports camps, you may be able to find specific skill-building camps (e.g., gymnastics or goalie camps) or general sports. If you are considering academic-focused camps, you can identify camps or programs that are aligned with your child's interests and potential career goals. Moreover, when considering academic camps, keep in mind some universities offer summer programs that are delivered by third parties while others connect students with their own faculty. Other great camps can be found at museums, zoos, and parks.

If your child already has a few potential careers in mind, summer is also a great opportunity for our high school students to connect with family members, friends, or professional contacts and have informational interviews. These interviews can take place at a nearby restaurant or coffee shop or even at the individual's office. Some sites may even allow students to shadow an employee for a day or special event or take a behind-the-scenes tour. To prepare for a casual informational interview, students should write down a few questions ahead of time to learn more about what a day-to-day life as an accountant, creative director, or occupational therapist might look like.

In addition, if your family vacation may be taking you to near universities, you can consider a quick detour as many universities

offer guided tours. These can be arranged by looking at the university website's "potential student" section. You can also email individuals from the university's "student life" or "admissions" departments. There is no need to pack whole days with university visits but planning a few half-days for these purposes can help students learn more about what life on campus might feel like.

Below are some options for summer enrichment activities. Please note these activities are not affiliated with SCIS but are recommended by SCIS faculty.

Residential Camps:

Space Camp (US) <https://www.spacecamp.com/>

Oxbridge Camps (Europe and UK) <https://www.oxbridgeprograms.com/>

YMCA (US) <https://www.ymca.org/what-we-do/youth-development/camp>

Keru Enterprise Camps (China) <http://www.keruknowledge.com/>

Day Camps:

Field Museum (US) <https://www.fieldmuseum.org/summer-camps-programs>

Indiana University Bloomington (US) <https://precollege.indiana.edu/>

Purdue University*(US) <https://www.purdue.edu/hr/familyfriendly/summerCamps/>

Clemson University*(US) <https://www.clemson.edu/summer/camps/>

Nike Athletic Camps (US) <https://www.ussportscamps.com/>

**Indicates options for neurodiverse students*



*By Sarah Harkin, Upper School
Counselor at SCIS Pudong*





Modern Polymaths: Why Having an Arts Education Leads to Success

The 21st century is a time of rapid change in almost every area of society and it is easy to feel overwhelmed by this at times when it seems there is an expectation to adapt to a constantly shifting global environment. Education is no exception to this 'change narrative' and this can lead to questions about the value of what has been traditionally seen as central and important in a young person's education. Questions such as "what do employers see as essential for young people entering the workforce?" and "what subjects are the most important for college entrance?" are worth considering.

In today's world, there is a growing emphasis on STEM subjects (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) in education. This trend has led to some questioning the value of an arts education, but the truth is that an education in the arts is more important than ever in the 21st century. So what are employers looking for in the 21st-century workforce and how is an arts education fundamentally important in developing these skills?

One of the key benefits of an arts education is the development of creativity. In a world where innovation is highly valued, creativity is an essential skill.

The arts encourage students to think outside the box and find unique or new approaches to problems. Similarly, the ability to analyze information, evaluate arguments, and make informed decisions is crucial in today's complex world. An arts education can also help students to develop their **critical thinking** skills by exposing them to different perspectives and ways of thinking. Harvard University professor and educational expert, Tony Wagner, noted that *"The ability to think creatively and the ability to think critically are two sides of the same coin. And the arts help to develop both."* (Wagner, 2012, p.81)

Another benefit of an arts education is the development of **communication skills**. Whether it is through written or verbal communication, or through visual media, the arts require students to express themselves effectively. This skill is highly valuable in any field, as effective communication is key to success in many professions. Also, in an increasingly globalized world, the ability to understand and appreciate different cultures is essential. An arts education can expose students to different cultures and help them to develop **cultural competency**.

Rapid change requires the ability to adapt to new situations and challenges. An arts education can help students to develop **adaptability** by encouraging them to be flexible and approach problems from different angles. Finally, an arts education can be an important source of **personal fulfillment**. It allows students to express themselves creatively and explore their own identity. This can be especially important in a world where external pressures and expectations can be overwhelming.

A second challenging question to consider could also be "what is the value of the arts for college applications, or simply as a lifelong interest?". Colleges generally view an arts education positively, as it demonstrates a student's creativity, passion, and dedication to pursuing their interests. Admissions officers look for well-rounded students who have

pursued a range of interests and activities, and an arts education can demonstrate this kind of versatility and engagement. Sir Ken Robinson states that *"The arts, sciences, humanities, physical education, languages and math all have equal and central contributions to make to a student's education. They are not separate subjects, but different facets of the same thing. They are different expressions of our humanity, and they are all important."* (Robinson, 2013, p.23)

In addition to the value of an arts education, there is also growing evidence that having many interests can lead to success. Modern polymaths, or individuals with a diverse range of interests and skills, are highly valued in the workforce. Beyond the workforce, having many interests can also lead to personal fulfillment. Pursuing multiple interests allows individuals to explore their passions and find what truly makes them happy. This can lead to a more fulfilling and satisfying life.

Recent research from the OECD shows that *"Artistic and cultural education is an essential component of a comprehensive education, enabling individuals to develop creative and critical thinking, collaborative and communicative skills, and a capacity for innovation that are essential to their future*

employability and to the development of more inclusive, resilient, and sustainable societies." (OECD, 2013, p. 31)

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By Glen Fleury, MYP Arts Teacher and Head of the Art Department at SCIS Hongqiao





Immersing in China Culture



It is well-known that culture should be the core content of foreign language teaching. At SCIS, we highly value the inclusion of Chinese culture in the teaching and learning of Mandarin.

Learning our host country's language (Mandarin) is a great way to immerse our students in the culture. Chinese characters often tell stories and are easy to remember when exploring their etymology. We teach Chinese radicals to novice students, which will help them build up their characters as they move up to the next levels of Mandarin learning. The close connection between Chinese characters and their cultural roots is obvious and adds a cultural dimension to language learning.

We always encourage our students to make friends with locals because building relationships with the local people is one of the best ways to learn Mandarin as well as to integrate into Chinese culture. In addition, exploring the local cuisine is another great way to experience the culture. We organize field trips to local Chinese food markets and restaurants so that students can try local dishes to better understand the food culture and dining etiquette.

Our Middle Years Programme (MYP) Mandarin Phase 3 and Phase 4 students are currently exploring the Unit of Chinese Folktales and Legends which can be an engaging and educational experience that helps students learn more about Chinese history, culture, and values. By teaching the concepts of character development, moral lessons, cultural values, and beliefs, students will gain a deeper understanding of Chinese legends and the role they play in Chinese history and culture. They will also be able to identify and appreciate the universal themes and lessons that can be found in these timeless stories.



Students in our Chinese Language and Literature classes recently learned to analyze and write poems to further demonstrate their understanding of Chinese culture. Overall, students were able to improve their abilities in appreciating Chinese art through their poetry.

One of the annual highlights at our school is the celebration of various Chinese festivals including the mid-Autumn festival, Lantern Festival, and Lunar New Year also known as Chinese New Year in China. Chinese New Year is celebrated as a whole school event, where students watch dragon and lion dance on the field. Both Lower School and Upper School students showcase their Mandarin learning and cultural understanding through performances such as Chinese calligraphy, painting, singing, dancing, and short plays in Mandarin.

Volunteering is a great way to give back to the community and learn more about the culture. Our high school students have been participating in activities and projects that involve local Chinese school students by creating a language exchange activity with a local Chinese primary school in Changning district. Our students read English books to the primary school students, and, in exchange, our students



understand more Chinese culture by interacting with the local school students.

As language teachers, we are all aware that understanding a culture that is different from one's own expands one's cognitive and psychological competence. As such, integrating Chinese culture has always been an important element in our Mandarin teaching and learning at SCIS. By immersing our students in Chinese culture, we would like them to understand an alternative way of living, thinking, and feeling.



By Helen He, MYP and DP Mandarin Language Acquisition Teacher at SCIS Hongqiao



The Importance of Sensory Play

What is sensory play?

Sensory play includes any play activities that encourage a child to explore materials that stimulate their senses. These activities can range from yoga or dancing to sand play or finger painting. The Early Childhood Education (ECE) children at SCIS can reap the invaluable benefits of sensory play in our thoughtfully prepared environment at school every day.

From birth to early childhood, children use their five senses to explore and try to make sense of the world around them. It is an important part of early childhood development and providing opportunities for children to actively use their senses as they explore their world through sensory play. Learning through sensory exploration comes naturally to babies and

young children, which makes sense when you consider the skills that they will come to rely on to build an understanding of objects, spaces, people, and interactions that are yet to be fully developed.

As adults, our senses provide us with vital information that we use to inform decision-making thousands of times a day. We may take this ability for granted and barely notice it, but it is for this reason that helping children to learn about their own senses is so important. Picking things up and feeling their texture is what people often associate with sensory play, but it is much more than just touch. Sensory play includes any activity that stimulates a young child's senses of touch, smell, taste, sight, and hearing, as well as anything which engages movement and balance.

“If it hasn't been in the hand and body, it can't be in the brain.”

- Bev Bos



The Importance of Sensory Play

Sensory play enhances the way in which a child reacts to their environment through visual, auditory, kinesthetic, olfactory, and gustatory perceptions. Young children have a physical and emotional desire to see, hear, touch, smell, and taste things that are within reach and new to them. As a child grows, the need for exploring materials within their world continues. Sensory exploration enhances cognitive, social, emotional, and behavioral development.

Other reasons sensory play is beneficial for children include:

- Helping to build neural connections in the brain.
- Encouraging the development of motor skills.
- Supporting language development.
- Encouraging scientific thinking and problem-solving.
- Involving mindful activities which are beneficial for all children.
- For some children, it is incredibly relaxing and soothing.

I often find that children who come to school distressed are soothed by playing in water or bubbles or playdough. For some children, they are more willing to talk when they are scooping up rice with their hands or molding clay. The desire to engage with sensory play comes naturally for children and should be encouraged and supported both at home and in early learning environments.

Provide Enough Time

All exploration takes time. If a child becomes attuned to and engaged with their environment, they will need time to explore, discover, and connect with all their senses. When this is encouraged, challenging behaviors naturally lessen. Children learn to self-regulate, communicate their ideas, and are ready to absorb new information. Most importantly, children will find joy and enthusiasm for learning which will carry them through their whole lives.



*By Clair Wain,
Early Childhood
Education Coordinator
at SCIS Hongqiao*

Following Your Passion Pathway



One of the best features of the International Baccalaureate (IB) programme at SCIS is the agency it provides students. When selecting courses in the Diploma Programme (DP), our students can pursue a path that best fits their contexts, both now and in the future. This means that students' schedules are bespoke, allowing them to explore courses that align with their passions.

Additionally, at SCIS our teachers are building their capacity to ensure our students can pursue their interests. An example is the DP Design Technology course offered in the Group 4 Sciences. As SCIS Hongqiao successfully implemented the Middle Years Programme (MYP) Design course, students developed a passion for the subject and advocated for the DP course offering. DP Design students exhibit the characteristics of a good designer: problem-solving across disciplines, establishing concepts that underline methodology, and developing innovative products to meet user needs. We are now in the third cohort of the course with previous graduates attending design programs in Germany, the United Kingdom, and the United States.



SCIS also recognizes students have a variety of passions. Current DP students can pursue their passion for the Arts by taking one of four Group 6 courses – Film, Music, Theatre, and Visual Arts. The programme allows students to showcase their passions through exhibitions and performances that double as assessment components. Our students' passions shine when they talk with community members about the motivation behind the pieces. Their love for the subject is apparent when performing original compositions influenced by explorations into new cultures.

SCIS students also support other students to find and explore their passions. Through the Dragon Fit initiative students engage in redefining health, expressing habits and happiness, and participating in monthly initiatives. In February, DP students Alice M.

and Mary M. encouraged Grade 6 students to set health goals and consider lifestyle choices through their Creativity, Activity, and Service (CAS) project. Daeyeop K. and Rayeon (Ryan) K. contributed by setting challenging SMART goals around their sleeping and exercise habits, emerging as examples of healthy lifestyles at SCIS. These interactions provide continuity in the passions of students at SCIS.

To pay it forward, DP students in their final year provide guidance to students as they enter the programme. On March 23, students convey their passion for subjects by presenting content, concepts, approaches, and assessment details for DP courses. This guidance provides valuable insights for our incoming cohorts as they follow their passions.

SCIS adheres to the key elements of the IB programme by providing a broad, balanced, conceptual, and connected curriculum. We emphasize the importance of learners making connections, exploring the relationships between academic disciplines, and learning about the world in ways that reach beyond the scope of individual subjects. Our students have authentic opportunities to connect their learning to the world around them. In so doing, SCIS Dragons are able to follow and develop their passions in deeply meaningful ways.



**By Scott Simmons,
Upper School Vice
Principal and DP
Coordinator at
SCIS Hongqiao**



How We Make Relevant, Real-World Connections in the PYP

Action and agency are at the heart of the International Baccalaureate (IB). As an IB World school, we take pride to ensure all “*Students have voice, choice and ownership for their own learning*” (IBO, 2018). When the learning community is supportive of action and agency, students are inspired to take authentic action that is meaningful. “*When students see tangible actions that they can choose to take to make a difference, they see themselves as competent, capable and active agents of change*” (IBO, 2018). We know that students make relevant, real-world connections through action and agency.

The benefits of providing children space, time, and support to be agents of their own action leads to lifetime learning. Here at SCIS, students know they are part of a learning community that celebrates their learning. Learning celebrations, student action, and student leadership are perfect examples of how students take action to make relevant, real-world connections. Learning celebrations typically take place at the



end of a Unit of Inquiry and are designed for children to share with others by presenting special projects or a piece of work that reflects the essence of their learning. Students work with their teacher to prepare learning spaces, displays, and experiences for people to interact with during a learning celebration. It is such an incredible experience to see five- and six-year-old Kindergartners confidently communicate their learning with high school seniors. The benefits for learning celebrations extend to both the students presenting and those in the audience.

A great example of how action is inspired by relevant, real-world connections within PYP was the Grade Three "How the World Works", Structures Unit of Inquiry. Grade Three students were inspired by a teacher who uses a walker to inquire into accessibility on the Pudong campus. The Grade Three students were very aware of their teacher's challenges and were highly motivated to investigate and advocate for improving access in our school because they were able to connect their learning

to someone close to them. The students used their teacher's walker to test ramps, measure space in bathrooms, navigate between desks and classrooms, and discovered opportunities for improvement in our school's design. They used what they discovered during their exploration to design models of spaces in our school that could be improved to be more accessible for people with disabilities.

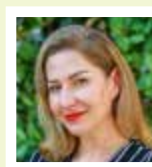
Knowing that the Pudong campus is undergoing renovations, some students approached the administration and wanted to invite members of the design and operations team to their learning celebration where they presented problems and solutions that are relevant and real to our building's structure. During the learning celebration, students confidently outlined the problems and solutions in a clear, coherent, and confident manner impressing those in positions to make changes.

Without having this real-world, relevant connection they may have taken a different

path during their inquiry. By having a real-life problem to solve, the sense of advocacy and action was more than an aspirational inspiration, it was a sense of urgency that warranted a response. By giving students a chance to share who they are, what they care about, and how they hope to make changes, they are living our mission by being knowledgeable, caring learners who contribute positively to their community.

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**By Dr. Molly Myers,
Lower School Principal
at SCIS Pudong**

Navigating the Future: How SCIS and the IB Prepares Students for an AI-Influenced World



We are pleased to present this article on how the Shanghai Community International School (SCIS) and the International Baccalaureate (IB) programme can effectively prepare students for a future where AI, big data, and machine learning are becoming increasingly prevalent. It is worth noting that the content of this article was generated with the assistance of an AI large language model (LLM), but we have taken great care to ensure that the information provided is both informative and accurate. We hope that this article offers valuable insights into the relationship between AI and education, and we welcome your feedback and comments.

In today's rapidly evolving world, it's essential for students to acquire the skills and knowledge necessary to thrive in a technology-driven society. At SCIS, we provide a diverse and inclusive learning environment that fosters cross-cultural understanding, which is crucial in a world where AI and big data are transforming the way we communicate and connect across borders. We focus on global perspectives and offer programs and activities that encourage students to engage with real-world issues and develop a deep understanding of our interconnected world. Our approach equips students with the tools and knowledge to navigate a rapidly changing world where AI and other emerging technologies are becoming increasingly important.

To prepare students for success in an AI-influenced world, SCIS and the IB provide a comprehensive educational program that emphasizes inquiry-based learning, critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving skills. Our educational philosophy stresses interdisciplinary learning, which is crucial for understanding the complex relationship between technology, society, and the environment. By encouraging students to think critically and creatively, we prepare them to tackle the challenges of a world influenced by AI and other emerging technologies.

SCIS invests in cutting-edge facilities and tools, such as design labs, 3D printers, robotics, and laser cutters, among others, to ensure that students are well-prepared to engage with emerging technologies and build the digital literacy skills required for success in a technology-driven society.

Moreover, we provide students with numerous opportunities for experiential learning, such as internships, community service, residential trips within China, and other hands-on learning activities. These programs help students apply their



knowledge in real-world contexts, hone their problem-solving skills, and develop the information and skills required to succeed in a world influenced by AI and other emerging technologies. In this way, SCIS ensures that students are not just prepared to engage with technology but also to use it for the benefit of society.

As we navigate a rapidly changing world influenced by AI and other emerging technologies, it's vital to equip students with the skills and knowledge needed to thrive in a technology-driven society. At SCIS, our comprehensive educational program prepares students to tackle the challenges of the future with confidence. We invest in cutting-edge facilities and provide numerous opportunities for experiential learning to ensure that our students are well-prepared to engage with emerging technologies and use them for the benefit of society. With our approach and philosophy, we inspire our students to be the change-makers of tomorrow.



{{AI generated notification}} - - -

The above article used Copy.ai an LLM computer program on March 22, 2023, to generate the initial copy of the text using the prompt: "Convince why the Shanghai Community International School and the IB are excellent options for preparing students to be successful in the future where AI, big data and machine learning will become more ubiquitous." At the time of writing this article, there is no agreed way to cite AI in academic papers and this is an area that is continuing to be developed. The IB has decided not to ban AI software as it believes that it will become a tool that is used in our everyday lives much like spelling and grammar correction features in word processing software. We as a learning community must learn how to develop our AI skills to stay ahead and be prepared for the future in a rapidly changing world.



*By Gregory Read, Director of
Technology and Innovation at SCIS*



The Next COMIC ARTIST to LOOK OUT FOR

At Shanghai Community International School (SCIS), students are taught the whole creative process, from critical observation and thinking to reflection and presentation, while also being challenged to express their artistic selves.

In our latest #CommunityVoices interview, we had the opportunity to meet with Simon, a seventh grader at SCIS Hongqiao who has passion and perseverance for the arts. As a naturally gifted artist, he has recently won a book cover illustration competition in Europe and even published his first comic book.

Learn more about Simon and his latest accomplishments in the featured interview below.

Introduce yourself.

My name is Simon. My mom is Korean, and my dad is Chinese. I've been at SCIS since I was in Grade 4. I like drawing and playing guitar and drums.

Congratulations on becoming a published illustrator! Can you tell us about the latest competition you won?

I was introduced to a book cover competition organized by a French Publisher, Renaissance, and submitted my work in November 2022. I still cannot forget the moment I received the email which said that I won the competition and the book with my drawing as its book cover, and to be distributed in bookstores in Europe.

What is the book about?

The book is about a woman with impaired vision and her guide dog who are living in

Brittany, France. I needed to create the book cover which includes these two characters and needed to paint the sea and the beach in Brittany as how she sees from her impaired vision. It was quite challenging in the beginning! I researched a lot about visual impairment, guide dogs and Brittany.

Would you say drawing is your passion?

Yes. I draw every day. Drawing has been my favorite pastime since I was very little. I also love comics. I draw comics whenever I have time. I often share my comics with my friends. I even made some comics using some of my friends as the main characters. I want to improve my art skills by learning more techniques and trying out different art styles.

Who are your biggest influencers when it comes to drawing?

I look up to Marvel comics and especially Stan Lee since he's good at making stories.



My favorite Marvel superhero is Spider-Man because the Spider-Man series has an interesting plot and good characters. My favorite artist is Jack Kirby. I love his vibrant artwork which is very detailed and interesting.

What other hobbies do you enjoy?

I play drums and guitar. I have been playing guitar since I was in Grade 1 and drums since Grade 3. I like this hobby because I can play my favorite songs. Also, I participated in the school play, Badger, this semester. It was fun and interesting, and I want to try again next semester.

You shared with us that you recently made a comic. Can you tell us what it is about?

The title is "Cyborg Burton vs Pig Evil". It's about a criminal who went missing and the police went searching for him everywhere, but they couldn't find him. And this superhero called Cyborg Burton came and traced the footprints of the criminal.

I actually made this story when I was in Grade 3, but at that time I wasn't so good at making stories and drawing. Four years later, I decided to pick up where I left off and finished the project.

What were the challenges of creating this comic?

I started this book in December 2021 and finished it in November 2022. It took almost a year, so one of the biggest challenges is to continue working on it. Other challenges are completing the story



and planning out the setting carefully. Otherwise, readers won't understand what I am trying to say.

I invited my friends and had a small book release party. It was very rewarding to see my readers enjoy reading my book after all the challenges I faced during the one-year book-making journey. If you are interested in reading my book, you can find it in our Upper School library because I donated two copies of my book.

Do you hope to become a professional artist one day?

I want to become a comic artist or want to work in this industry where I can use my creativity and art skills.

Who would you like to thank for your drawing journey?

I would like to thank my mom for being a strong supporter and a good critic at the same time. And I also want to thank all the art teachers I had who motivated me to be better.

What are your next goals?

I want to achieve good grades in all arts subjects and continue to run my drawing club. I was so happy to receive good feedback from my club members this year.



Interview by Elena Tan,
Digital Communications Officer at SCIS



Book Review:

How to Pour Your Glass Half Full

The Keys to Living a Life of Enthusiasm, Gratitude, and Vitality *by Dr. Nicholas Spring-Peers*

Back in February 2022, we first interviewed Dr. Nicholas Spring-Peers for our #CommunityVoices segment, where he discussed his experience of completing his Doctor of Education and how he utilizes self-development and teaches his students to do the same.

After a couple of hurdles here and there, we are back with Dr. Nicholas Spring-Peers where he has completed his first non-fiction novel "How to Pour Your Glass Half Full" - a guide to living your best life.

This is your second interview with us, how does it feel to be interviewed again?

It's exciting. It feels nice to contribute to the community and share some of my journey. It's always great to discuss knowledge.

My first interview was about my doctorate degree in education during the pandemic, a very interesting circumstance. There were a lot of interruptions, a lot of things happening. We also discussed the impetus to complete it and why I was motivated to do so. We talked about the self-development side of pursuing higher education and pushing yourself to achieve your full potential.

We heard you wrote your first book! Congratulations! Can you tell us about your new book?

It's a self-development book. It's called "How to Pour Your Glass Half Full", so

it's about how to achieve more gratitude, enthusiasm, and happiness in life. It touches upon several different areas. One is thinking about the past, the people who came before us, and how difficult life indeed was. When we look around at our lives now, it is filled with so many conveniences and breakthroughs in technology that have enabled us to live very comfortably and longer. But it's also about understanding the shortness of life and that life can go by very quickly. And for some people, unfortunately, it can end sooner than expected. A lot of research went into the book, such as academic research, so it's not just my opinion on these topics. I spent a lot of time looking at journal articles about happiness, mood, and energy. It came down to a lot of compelling findings, such as the way you take care of yourself, the way you sleep, and what you fill your mind with. I wanted to find out all the things that I find effective for me, it may not be helpful for everyone, but I just wanted to share these things, and the research suggests that it could work for others too.

How does it feel to be a published author?

It doesn't feel any different. Especially nowadays, you can be self-published, which is what I did. If you were published by a big publishing company, it would be a different accomplishment. But for me, I am a do-it-yourself kind of person. I used Amazon which is an amazing tool where they give authors a lot of empowerment

to accomplish their goal. They let you self-publish, and they take care of all the distribution. It was great for me to just try and do it on my own. I am proud of the final product; a lot of work went into it.

As this is a self-published book, how do you promote your book to the public?

The goal of the book project was really to give back. It got published right after the lockdown. Everyone has been through so much in the community. And I just thought "what a great way to try to give people a resource." Now, some people won't read it and that's fine. I at least wanted to make it an option. I didn't charge anyone; I just gave it away. It was an opportunity for me to give back and the timing of it was great because money couldn't make up for what had happened. People told me "I read your book and it really helped me get through the crazy time we all experienced." Hearing these things makes it all worthwhile.

What inspired you to write this book?

It's all about becoming a better version of myself every day. There have been some influential people in my life, not that I have met personally in my life, but Jim Rohn and Tony Robbins have gotten me to see that you are not a victim of your circumstance. You create your destiny. I grew up in a tough environment: in a single-parent family in poverty, and I fought my way out of that. It was self-development that enabled it to happen. Reading and learning that you are in control. You can make decisions that will ultimately lead to your success or failure

and it's no one else's responsibility to get you where you need to get. That journey has led me to the book because I have taken so much from the field, so I wanted to give back to the field. I hope someone can read my book and get the spark that I got.

Can you tell us about your book journey?

Some days you feel like writing, you get excited, and those days are easy. But it's the days when you don't feel like it. Mel Robbins has a great way of looking at it, "you are never going to feel like doing things sometimes, but you still have to do them if you want to achieve something." The ups and downs were really those mornings when I didn't feel like writing. But once you get going, the momentum takes over. I love the analogy of a rocket ship. When it takes off, it uses about 95% of the fuel, but once it's going it uses only 5% because it's already in motion. And with humans, once you get moving, the energy starts, and the flow picks up. The next thing you know is that 3 or 4 hours have gone by, and you have tangible results in front of you.

There was so much uncertainty during the lockdown. That weighed on me at times. But that's why I'm so grateful that the book allowed me to take my mind into this project. Since the book is about being happy, the research is all about positive things. It allowed me to put my mindset into really good materials and my mind was there, not drifting away into the struggles that were happening.

There are days when your brain is trying to make things easy. You must not listen to your brain; it's tricking you to do it the easy way. Nothing great happens when you do it the easy way. Jim Rohn says, "Don't wish life were easier, wish you were better". When it's hard, you have to be more disciplined.

As this is such a broad topic, how did you limit yourself to writing only what you needed to write?

I wanted to touch upon the things that I know for sure have enabled me to be who I am. When I made a list, it was about eight things, but the book ended up being way more than that. It's okay for things to come up because sometimes your ideas come at random times. In the last chapter, I decided

to have only ten final things and I couldn't have more than that. I didn't want it to be a big book because some people may not want to read it. But you don't want it to be too small. So, I thought a 300–400-page book is an appropriate amount.

How does this book impact your way of teaching your students?

I actually use it in my business class. We talked about how businesses sometimes outsource other tasks to other businesses. I used the example of my book where I outsourced the book cover design. I wanted to show the cool era we live in. On websites like Fiver and Freelancer, we can access people all around the world, even people who are in poorer nations, so you're giving them work and helping them get ahead. Instead of using a local person or someone who is in North America, we can use anyone in the world. If you are not good at something, there is always someone else who is good at it and can do it for you!

I want to teach my DP students that they can accomplish anything if they put the work and time in. But you have to watch that fine line of preaching. You want to be relatable. We talked about successful people and where they come from. I'm not a billionaire, but where I came from, my life is significantly better than if I stayed in that environment. You can leverage your strength and move past your circumstances.

From your book, what two cents would you like to share with us?

There is so much control we have in our lives that we don't even know it. We can

choose how we respond to things. So, my two cents would be based on Viktor Frankl, "Between stimulus and response lies our freedom to choose". Whatever is happening in your life is the stimulus. How you respond to that, the gap in between, that's your ability on how you choose to approach challenges and difficulties. The book talks about how fragile life is. If it were to end tomorrow, would you complain about the traffic or the Starbucks that wasn't warm enough? People who have had near-death experiences, report that after, they don't allow these things to bother them again. They realize it's not worth it.

From becoming a Doctor of Education to a published author, what's your next step?

Writing the book was a great experience and I realized I love writing. I've already started a second book focused on behavioral economics and personal finance, particularly related to expats and the difficulties/challenges we face in saving for retirement. I want to try and help other expats see that our future selves are relying on our current selves more than we may think. I want to write about the strategies that can help us shift our thinking toward a more future-oriented approach, which may help us procure a more comfortable and stress-free retirement!



*Interview by Elena Tan,
Digital Communications
Officer at SCIS*





Discovering a Sense of Belonging at SCIS

MMeet Silvia Gatti and Tony Cordischi! Silvia and Tony flew from Italy to Shanghai 12 years ago, where they shaped their family of three children to become global citizens. From transitioning from a bilingual school to an international school, Silvia, Tony, and their children finally found their place at Shanghai Community International School (SCIS) where they have built a strong kinship with the vibrant and close-knit community.

Hear from those who experience SCIS first-hand, our Community Voices, as we celebrate their success stories, learning journeys, and the struggles in between.

Tell us about you and your family!

Silvia: My name is Silvia. I am from Italy, and we have been in Shanghai for 12 years. We have three kids at SCIS in Grades 4, 9, and 11. We joined SCIS Pudong four years ago. Before our kids were at a bilingual private school. We chose to change schools because many changes in the Chinese educational system pushed us to switch

to an international school. Now, I am the PAFA President.

Tony: I am Tony, Silvia's husband, and I am the father of Federico, Francesca, and Alice. We are glad to be here for a long time with a family business in China where China plays a vital role in building the future for our kids. Now my kids speak Chinese and interact with people from other countries, and I am very proud of them.

We initially put our kids in a bilingual school so they could understand more about the Chinese culture and language, and respect the country. To have respect, you must give respect.

How did you end up choosing SCIS?

Silvia: When we went to SCIS for the first time and as we entered the school, Julia from Admissions was holding a sign with our name on it. It didn't feel like we were just another number. Then, we met Ms. Luebbe, and she was terrific. It felt like home. Ms. Shanks knows all the students

by their names and that was amazing knowing that she sees the school as her family, her community.

Since the first day, I have wanted to be a part of PAFA because I wanted to be involved. I love the PAFA Board, even though we are all different from different countries with different perspectives. They became my family.

Tony: It's the combination of the family and school. It's about how teachers can be a part of our children's lives. And that's what we felt from SCIS.

What is the biggest difference between a bilingual school and SCIS?

Silvia: The biggest difference is the opportunity for extra-curricular activities. Not only for sports but also for drama. Since the beginning, I've pushed my children to be a part of the school plays to help them grow and express themselves.

Back at the bilingual school, there were



no opportunities for family and friends to meet. But at SCIS, I pushed myself to make friends with the other parents which led me to have a more international and social lifestyle in Shanghai.

How did you become the PAFA President?

Silvia: I didn't really want to become the PAFA President. We were looking for a new President before the pandemic, and I was already on the PAFA Board as the Event Coordinator for one year. During covid, some members left China, and some left PAFA, so we had to start from scratch. One of the Board members encouraged me to be President, but at that time I didn't think I could do it alone. But when my kids didn't think I could do it, I wanted to prove them wrong. So, I challenged myself to become President.

What does community mean to you?

Tony: For me, it's the concept of a family. A family is surrounded by other families that share the same values, and that is

what I feel from SCIS. A community strictly links to the family concept, and this is why I believe SCIS is a perfect match for our values, traditions, and what we believe in. It's the best base for the future of our kids.

Silvia: There is one word that SCIS constantly mentions, which is "inclusivity". Upper School students stop and talk to Lower School students. They stay together, talk together, and play together. When I am on campus, I can see and feel this positive attitude. The teachers not only know the names of each student, but they know the personality of each student to push students to be their best and let them try new activities.



*Interview by Elena Tan,
Digital Communications
Officer at SCIS*



Achieving Beyond Academics

At Shanghai Community International School (SCIS), we prepare students to not only succeed in academics, but also to explore potential pathways that extend beyond classroom walls. Our engaging community provides outlets for passions to flourish in all aspects of interest from athletics to the arts.

In our latest *Once, Always* series, we connected with Izzy Johnson, an alumnus from the SCIS Pudong Class of 2020, where she shares how SCIS cultivated her athletic skills to become a college-level athlete at Concordia College in Moorhead, Minnesota.

Since you've graduated, what do you miss about SCIS?

The thing I miss the most about SCIS would probably be the location or the

friends I made there. I have a few lifelong friends that I barely get to see anymore since we are all in different parts of the world. And after living in such a big city, moving to a small college town was a culture shock, but I learned to appreciate the experiences I had overseas.

Tell us a story of how SCIS has shaped you to become the person you are today.

Being part of the women's basketball team with our Head Coach, Ethan Schultz, has played a large part in shaping who I am as a person. While he had a quieter coaching style, he was always fiercely proud of us and encouraged us to work towards our own goals both inside and outside the sport. That's something I've taken into my own athletics journey. I have been able to prioritize academics while still being able

to improve on track by setting goals and working to improve. My time in the SCIS rock bands was also something I took with me. I still have a passion for music and have my own band here in Moorhead Minnesota. It is raining in paradise and we are set to release a few songs in the new year!

What is something unique you have achieved since you graduated from SCIS?

My biggest challenge was joining an NCAA D3 Track Team and finding the confidence to start running with the team. I was always able to keep up with the lifts since I like to lift regularly but I was very worried that I wouldn't be able to keep up in the speed drills. I did have to put that worry aside when I went to my first practice, but I joined a wonderful team full of supportive people with amazing coaches who validated my worry and made sure I wasn't too hard on myself since it was my first time ever doing track. To put it shortly, I overcame the challenges with the help of my team members while pushing through my apprehension.

What are your current aspirations? Where do you see yourself in five years?

My current aspirations are finishing up my Double Majors (Physical Education and Health Education) and Minor (Coaching), qualifying for outdoor MIAC in the 100- or 200-meter dash, and learning how to pole vault for competition next indoor season!

In five years, I hope to be back overseas and teaching somewhere in Asia! But I'm



also hoping that my band will have our first and second albums out and a few shows under our belt.

As a full-time athlete and a double-major student, how do you have time to juggle both?

My organization tools are a good routine and alarms on my phone. I have learned to not procrastinate and do things when I have time. It will all come down to how much self-motivation and discipline you have if you want to excel in both academics and athletics. However, it is a little easier if you've completed the IB programme while playing sports and doing after-school activities. The IB programme prepares you well for a college workload. It is important to remember to take a break when your body tells you even if it's just for five minutes lying on the floor or an hour-long workout.

If you could go back in time to when you were at SCIS, what is one thing you would change?

I would take part in more music classes! I am currently in a band and am struggling to find the time to learn how to read bass and guitar tabs which I could have easily learned while I was still at SCIS.

Do you have any advice/tips for current Dragon aspiring athletes?

You will become a better athlete if you seek improvement. This means asking your coaches what you can work on. If your form is good, you can do drills in your own time. You will also improve if you ask for feedback in all aspects of your life. It shows that you are coachable and always want to learn more and improve.

Thank you, Izzy, for sharing your journey with us, and we wish you all the best!

Once A Dragon, Always A Dragon.



*Interview by Elena Tan,
Digital Communications
Officer at SCIS*



THE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

Alumni Mission:

The SCIS Alumni Association has been established in order to foster the continued cordial relations of the SCIS community. Its goal was, and continues to be, to link alumni with the School and with each other, and to support and maintain such forged relationships. It strives to provide ample avenues and opportunities to encourage alumni to participate actively in the SCIS community.

Alumni Contact:

Elena Tan
etan@scis-china.org

Alumni Requirements:

1. Graduated from a SCIS Campus

OR

2. Went to school here for at least one year AND be over 18

Social Media

Facebook site:
<https://www.facebook.com/alumniSCIS/>

Linkedin site:
<https://www.linkedin.com/groups/4757677>



Basketball Recap



Hongqiao Varsity Boys Basketball 2023

Coach: Andre Sun

This was my first year coaching SCIS's varsity basketball team, rostered with four seniors, five juniors, and one sophomore. With the team's goal of winning ACAMIS, we practiced tirelessly on and off the court, forming good habits, learning new offense/defense schemes, and taking pleasure in establishing a competitive yet cooperative team atmosphere. We started the season 3-1, including an 18-point deficit comeback win! Personifying a true team spirit. During ACAMIS at Suzhou, we were 5-1 solidifying the first seed before the playoffs. Unfortunately, we couldn't overcome the difficulties of only having 9 players in an 8-game tournament, thus resulting in 4th place overall. Although we did not achieve our team's goal, we grew collectively and still enjoyed the season together as a unit. Upon reflecting, we understand the hurdles we will have to overcome next season and look forward to representing SCIS Dragons.



Pudong Varsity Boys Basketball 2023

Coach: Derek Luebbe, Luke Canthrell

Our varsity basketball team had an inspiring season, focusing on growth and improvement. Our players pushed themselves to develop their skills and bond with each other, creating a strong sense of unity and camaraderie that carried them through the season. Despite facing tough games, they never gave up and continued to work hard. Through their dedication and perseverance, they demonstrated a level of grit and resilience that we find truly inspiring. We're incredibly proud of their growth in skills, confidence, and teamwork. Thank you to the parents and school community for their support. This season was an opportunity for our players to learn and grow, and we're excited to see what they'll accomplish in the future. Derek and I are proud of their hard work and look forward to next year's season when we'll continue to work hard as a family.



Hongqiao Varsity Girls Basketball 2023

Coach: Ben Dunbar

Written by Justin Corvers

Our DI Girls Basketball team had an amazing season this year. Composed primarily of Grade 10 athletes, this young team showed a lot of growth and improved immensely. Captained by our sole Grade 11 student - Ashika G. - this team battled each and every game. The determination, grit, and passion for the sport that they showed were inspiring. The highlight of the season was certainly the ACAMIS Basketball tournament hosted by SSIS Suzhou. Finishing in the top 4 teams after round-robin games gave us a chance to battle it out with the best teams in the tournament. Ultimately, we came up short of our goal and lost in the bronze medal match. Overall, this was a year of learning and growth which has led to some real excitement as the future of SCIS Girls Basketball looks to be in great hands for years to come!



Hongqiao Junior Varsity Boys Basketball 2023

Coach: Sy Prescott

The Junior Varsity Basketball Team came into the season with very little game experience, but with a lot of passion for playing basketball. The team worked tirelessly in practice to improve their skills and knowledge of gameplay. The team took time to adjust during the first half of the season, going 1-1 for our first two games. After a longer-than-expected break, we had to rebuild our team chemistry. Yes, the boys worked diligently to refocus and rebuild their early season form and played well during our next set of games. We have built a great foundation this year and we are looking forward to creating a stronger team and season next year, Go Dragons!



Soccer Summary

Hongqiao Varsity Boys Soccer 2023

Coach: Rafael Navajas

The season began turbulently with the severe injury of our captain, which added to other important losses. This left the way for a short-numbered but very enthusiastic team with many young and new faces. The first training session focused on understanding the fundamentals of defending, switching of play, balancing, and transitioning. Maintaining a solid defense to base our attack became the pillar of our game philosophy.

In addition to the injuries, more players were out because of the flu, limiting our season before ACAMIS to two games. We finished the first day of ACAMIS with only seven players, without the possibility of changes, and became exhausted after four intense games. We started the second day with another last-minute injury, further limiting our team. We had to win the last round-robin game to make the playoffs. We won and classified fourth, forcing us to play in the semifinals against the strongest team. In a highly even match, we managed to qualify for the finals with an epic victory after overtime and penalties. Winning second place in the tournament is an example of resilience and overcoming adversity: players who fought despite having everything against them, who learned from their mistakes and made the team grow.





Hongqiao Varsity Girls Soccer 2023

Coach: Terri Walsh-Mosher

Our D1 Girls Soccer started off with a few sessions of training and then went directly into matches. Due to last season being cut short because of Covid and lockdowns, we had some returning players and welcomed new players to the roster. The team soon proved how well their skills, communication, and dedication prepared them for their matches by defeating their first opponents on SCIS turf! The training sessions continued, and a close match against SAS proved to be an intense game and helped to prepare the team for the ACAMIS tournament. The team faced the elements of rain, wind and cold, leading undefeated in the preliminary matches! After six games, the SCIS Dragons dominated the field and secured the first-place bracket for the finals against SSIS-Suzhou. After an intense match, with many bumps and bruises, extremely strong offense and defense, our Dragons lost by one goal to a strong team and took home the second-place trophy. A well-deserved finish for a team that worked so well together and supported each other all throughout the tournament. Congratulations to our D1 Girls!





The Art of Giving Back:

A Brief Chat with Mr. E

Since its inception in 2014, SCIS's Early Childhood Education (ECE) Charity Art Auction has provided over 20 underprivileged children with lifesaving heart surgeries. This highly anticipated annual event offers an opportunity to support a charitable cause, as well as to celebrate art created by our Early Childhood Education (ECE) students.

Art Auction

The evening comprises three main parts: a live auction, a silent auction, and an ongoing raffle. Teachers and ECE students work hard to create a masterpiece per class, with each student putting his/her artistic flair to the pieces. These original pieces are the highlight of the auction. Bids move fast and the excitement is high. For those who prefer a more relaxed setting, a silent auction is also displayed. Attendees browse through – and bid on – the excellent unique classes, experiences, and packages on offer. A favorite amongst our parents, the raffles are a source of entertainment on their own.

SCIS partners with a local charity to support children in need of heart surgery. Many underprivileged children and their families from rural areas cannot afford the surgery and associated medical costs. This is where SCIS's partner charity comes in. 30,000 RMB is the cost of one successful heart surgery and all proceeds from the art auction go to charity.

Why is giving so gratifying and touching for those involved? We sat down with Mr. Eschtruth, SCIS Director of Schools, to find out more about the ECE Art Auction origins and what makes this an important event on the school calendar.

How did the ECE Art Auction concept come about?

Mr. E: The SCIS mission is *"to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring learners who contribute positively to their communities."* When I was the ECE Principal, our community was looking for an opportunity to connect students and families with a meaningful community service experience. We thought that an art auction would be a great way to involve even our youngest students and did our best to choose a cause that our students could empathize with. That connection ensures this is not only an activity for parents and adults, but supports our ongoing effort as a school to highlight the importance of service to our community.

Is there a single event or highlight that stands out to you?

Mr. E: The moments that stick out the most are the visits to the hospital before and after the lifesaving surgeries our event has sponsored. The gratitude in the eyes and voices of the parents is so touching and of course, my heart is always filled with the children's laughter.

As a cause that is near and dear to you, what does the Art Auction mean to you personally?

Mr. E: Supporting a cause this closely has an everlasting impact. Parents and faculty are allowed to visit recovering children in the hospital. Knowing that our tight-knit ECE community has come together over the years to support so many children of

similar ages as our young ECE students is indeed an incredible source of pride. I still receive feedback from some of the first families we supported, which speaks to how their healthy child has flourished. I can't think of a better inspiration than that, to continue with this annual event.

What has been the most memorable part of the ECE Art Auction for you?

Mr. E: *"Life-saving, life-changing and life-enhancing"* - this is the charity's motto. Our first art auction was a complete unknown. A week before the event we only had around 18 tickets sold and considered canceling the event. As the event drew closer, we had nearly 100 attendees. With the support of proud parents, we were able to live up to this motto and support three children in receiving lifesaving heart surgery. SCIS hasn't looked back ever since.

Under the guidance of their teachers and teaching assistants, ECE students work for months to create beautiful pieces of art. A big shoutout to the teachers and parents who give their time and support to this charitable initiative. And a special thank you to our sponsors who provide exquisite items for the raffle and silent auction. Together, with the PAFA representatives and ECE support staff, we bring it all together on the night.

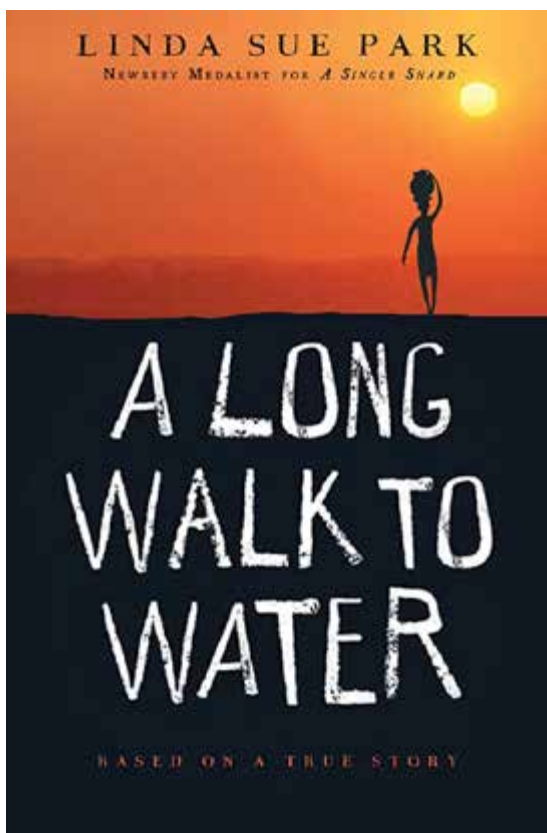
By May Botha, PAFA Early Childhood Representative



Book Recommendations for All Ages

Books are a handy resource packed with information, insights into a happy life, life lessons, love, fear, and lots of advantageous instruction. Books open doors to a world of ingenuity, creativity, and resourcefulness. And stories are an integral part of our lives. They talk about history, mythology, our beliefs, our inspirations, and possibilities of our future, the list is endless. Read below the book recommendations for all ages from our very own SCIS librarians:

Erin Ramsey, Lower and Upper School Librarian at SCIS Pudong



A Long Walk to Water

Linda Sue Park

Ages 10+

As we welcome families back on campus, traditions resume, and programs are thriving here at SCIS. It brings the chance to unite with friends, restart old traditions, and create the deep connections and relationships that SCIS is all about. We all have a story to tell from the past few years. Some of us worried about our health, food, and water while being in lockdown. Many of us have been separated from our families and friends for several months or years. Our hope and resilience stayed strong. *A Long Walk to Water* focuses on the psychological and emotional aspects of the struggle for survival. It's not enough to have food and water, Park suggests.

A Long Walk to Water is two interlocking stories, taking place in Sudan more than 20 years apart with two 11-year-olds in Sudan, a girl in 2008 and a boy in 1985. Their stories are told separately but eventually intersect. The girl, Nya, fetches water from a pond that is a two-hour walk from her home: she makes two trips to the pond every day. The boy, Salva, becomes one of the "lost boys" of Sudan, refugees who cover the African continent on foot as they search for their families and for a safe place to stay.

This story reminds us to persevere and not give up even when things seem hopeless. Salva is a survivor who endures every hardship from loneliness to attack to contact with killer lions and crocodiles, and his story goes on to intersect with Nya's in an astonishing and moving way. Includes an afterword by author Linda Sue Park and the real-life Salva Dut, on whom the novel is based, and who went on to find water in South Sudan.

Again, we have the opportunity through China Go! to expand our experiences in our vast host country for all that it is. It's an opportunity to expand our self-discovery, empathy, and outreach into the community. We can learn about and support communities in need beyond Shanghai. *A Long Walk to Water* is a story of how one person can make a difference. As a community, I hope that it will inspire action to help those in need.

Ashley Simmons, Upper School Librarian at SCIS Hongqiao

In the SCIS libraries, we encourage students to read and explore new ideas, appreciate new perspectives, gain new knowledge, and for the pure joy of reading. Students who understand why they are reading have the power to make reading choices suited to their interests and goals. Further, they can feel empowered to share their reading passions with others, as these two guest reviewers from SCIS Hongqiao Upper School have.

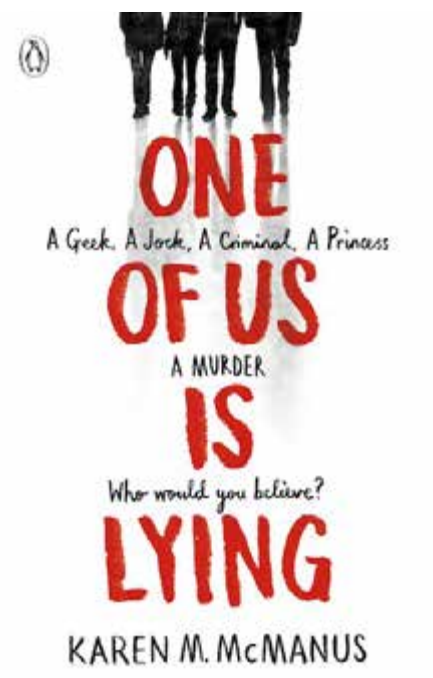
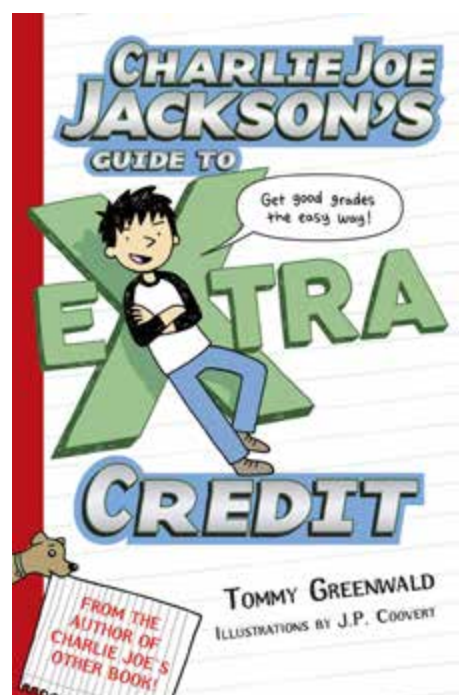
Charlie Joe Jackson's Guide to Extra Credit

by Tommy Greenwald

Ages 10+

Reviewed by Kiaan Singh, Grade 7

Charlie Joe Jackson's Guide to Extra Credit is a funny realistic fiction story focused on the comedic life of middle schoolers in America. In this award-winning novel, readers explore the life of the main character, Charlie Joe Jackson, who has been presented with an ultimatum by his parents: He gets straight A's on his next report card, or he spends his summer in reading camp. With the help of his friends, Charlie signs up for all the extra credit he can get. Tommy Greenwald writes a wholesome, witty, light-hearted, and all-around engaging story that reveals how to solve common problems that we may face in middle school.



One of Us is Lying

Karen McManus

Ages 15+

Reviewed by Stefania Paone, Grade 7

This story begins in detention with five students: Nate, Addy, Cooper, Brownwyn and Simon. Everything is going fine until Simon drops to the ground screaming for his EpiPen until it's too late. That's when the thrill of the book starts. The other four students need to live through accusations, hate and rumors throughout high school until the end when justice will be served to Simon Kheller. While finding out who the killer is, these four students start bonding closer to each other and try investigating the case themselves, but then regret it when they find some missing pieces in this murder. *One of Us is Lying* is a great book to read when you have some time to spare.



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